

## **Remarks**

### ***General:***

Claims 1-14 are pending in the application. Claims 1-14 stand rejected. Claim 8 is canceled. Claims 1, 9, 11, and 12 are amended. Claims 15-19 are new.

Claims 1, 9, 11, and 12 are amended to present more immediately the feature that when the housing of the adapter is rotated in the unscrewing direction, and the ring contact does not rotate, the adapter is retained by the ring contact, as distinct from unscrewing and leaving the ring contact behind in the socket. Basis for this feature is found in the rivets 54 and drive member 38 in Fig. 4, which prevent the housing 28 separating axially from the ring contact 46.

Support for new claims 15-19 is found in FIGS. 2 and 4 of the drawings and the associated text. The language of claim 15 is based on previous claims 1 and 14. The language of claims 16, 18, and 19 is based on previous claim 14. The language of claim 17 is based on the description of FIG. 4A in the specification.

### ***Drawings:***

The drawings were objected to as not showing the “arcuate slot” recited in claim 7. The objection is traversed. The arcuate slots appear in at least FIGS. 3, 5, 6A, and 6B of the drawings, indicated by the reference numeral 56. The arcuate shape of the slots is visible at least in FIG. 5, and the slots are described as “arcuate slots 56” in paragraph [0026] of the specification.

### ***Claim rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102:***

Claims 1, 9, and 11-14 stand rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,286,216 (Volz). Volz shows an adapter 36 for fitting a fluorescent light ballast 32 in a light-bulb socket 10. The adapter 36 has an external screw thread that fits into the internally threaded socket 10. The adapter 36 has an internal screw thread that receives a smaller screw thread on the ballast 32. A barb 44 projects tangentially from the external screw thread of the adapter 36, oriented so that the adapter 36 can be easily screwed into the socket 10, but is effectively prevented from being unscrewed. The examiner argues that the adapter 36 and the fluorescent light ballast 32 of Volz

in combination constitute the fluorescent adapter of claim 1.

The examiner's argument is apparently that the adapter 36 is the "threaded ring contact" surrounding (at least the threaded base 60 of) the ballast 32, which is the "housing." The adapter 36 is then rotatable with the ballast 32 when the ballast is rotated in a direction to screw it into the socket (first direction), and the adapter 36 is not rotatable with the ballast 32, because it is held by the barb 44, when the ballast is rotated in a direction to unscrew it (second direction). This is not correct, because Volz clearly instructs the reader, see col. 6, lines 3-6, to install the adapter 36 in the socket 10 and only then to install the ballast 32 in the adapter. Thus, the adapter 36 has ceased to be rotatable in the first direction, because it has been screwed in as far as it will go in that direction, before it is combined with the ballast 32. The adapter 36 never both is rotatable in the first direction and surrounds the housing, as required by claim 1.

Even supposing *arguendo* that it might have been obvious to mount the adapter 36 onto the threaded base 60 of the ballast 32, and screw the assembly into the socket 10, that is not the present invention. In that hypothetical manipulation of Volz's adapter, the assembly can be screwed into the socket 10. If an attempt is made to unscrew the assembly, the ballast 32 unscrews, the adapter 36 cannot unscrew and remains behind. The ballast 32 is easily removed, and is separated from the adapter 36 in the process. Volz's device would not provide "a fluorescent adapter comprising ... a housing [and] a threaded ring contact ... not rotatable with the housing when the housing is rotated in an opposite direction" because when the housing is rotated in the opposite direction there is no longer an adapter, but only a collocation of parts.

A disadvantage of Volz's device is that, once the ballast 32 has been removed, the adapter 36 is exposed, and is accessible to the application of sufficient torque to overcome the barb 44 and remove the adapter.

The present invention, in contrast, provides an adapter in which, when the housing is rotated in the second direction, the housing rotates, the ring does not rotate, and the adapter remains an assembled adapter. The housing, as well as the ring, remains captive in the socket. The application of torque to the ring can be effectively prevented, because the freely rotating housing is in the way.

There is no disclosure or suggestion in the reference of an adapter in which the housing rotates in the second direction while remaining assembled to the ring, the ring does not rotate, and the assembled housing and ring remain in the socket.

The language of claims 1, 9, 11, and 12 has been amended to make the distinction over Volz more immediately apparent, and it is believed that the present invention, as now claimed, is both new and non-obvious over the reference.

Claim 14 recites a fluorescent lamp assembly in which the adapter includes keyhole slot receptacles, and the ballast has input electrodes that are received in a bayonet style connection by the keyhole slot receptacles, and output electrodes for removably receiving the contact pins of the fluorescent lamp. The examiner identifies the pins 80 of Volz as the input electrodes of the ballast. That is incorrect. The pins 80 are the contact pins of the lamp, not pins of the ballast. Further, the examiner asserts that the pin receiving sockets 74 of Volz are “key slots” because they are “keyed to the contact pins.” That is incorrect. The pin receiving sockets 74 are holes, not slots. They are certainly not “keyhole slots” as required by claim 14: the term “keyhole slot” has a well understood meaning. None of the cited references discloses or suggests a structure in which the ballast is separate from the housing of the adapter, and is connected to the housing by keyhole slots in the housing adapted to receive the ballast input electrodes in a bayonet style connection, as required by claim 14. For this reason also, claim 14 is deemed both novel and non-obvious over the cited references.

Claims 2-7 are dependent from claim 1, and claim 13 is dependent from claim 12. Without prejudice to their individual merits, these claims are believed to be allowable over the cited references as claims dependent from an allowable base claim. In addition, however, there is no disclosure or suggestion in the cited reference of the feature of claim 12. The examiner asserts that Volz shows a configuration “wherein a ring has a slot matable with a corresponding housing projection,” but that is clearly incorrect, because the passage of Volz cited by the examiner does not even mention the housing. For this reason also, claims 12 and 13 are deemed novel and non-obvious over the cited reference.

***Claim rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103:***

Claims 2 and 3 are rejected as obvious over Volz in view of Yan. Claim 3 is dependent from claim 2. Claim 2 recites “a drive member on the housing for engaging the ring contact when the housing is rotated in the first direction during insertion of the adapter into the electrical

socket and for disengaging from the ring contact when the housing is rotated in the opposite direction.” The examiner acknowledges that feature is not shown by Volz. The examiner asserts that Yan shows “a lamp socket insert wherein a lamp screw base/housing is rotated in a first direction to engage the insert and in an opposite direction to disengage.” The examiner nowhere alleges that Yan teaches a drive member having the features recited in claim 2, and the rejection is traversed. The passage from Yan cited by the examiner in fact describes that a protruding boss 125 on the base unit (housing) passes through a hole 305 of the insert (ring) 300. Since the boss and hole are axial, there is no suggestion that the housing would engage the ring, and the boss is certainly not a “drive member” as required by claim 2. For this reason also, the present invention, as claimed in claims 2 and 3, is deemed non-obvious over the cited references.

In addition, it is pointed out that the insert in Yan is not a contact ring but an insulator. There is no suggestion or motivation to substitute the insulator of Yan for the contact ring of Volz, and for this reason also claim 2 and claims dependent therefrom are deemed non-obvious over the combination of Volz and Yan.

Claims 4-8 were rejected as obvious over the rejection of claim 2 and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,750,892 (Santopietro). Claims 4-7 are dependent from claim 2 and it is noted that Santopietro is relied on only in respect of the additional features recited in claims 4-7. Without prejudice to their individual merits, claims 4-7 are deemed non-obvious over the combination of Volz, Yan, and Santopietro for the same reasons as claims 1 and 2 are deemed non-obvious over Volz and Yan alone. Claim 8 contains in substance all the limitations of claim 7 and the claims from which claim 7 is dependent, and is canceled to eliminate unnecessary duplication.

Claim 10 was rejected as obvious over the rejection of claim 9 and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,736,526 (Matsuba). Claim 10 is dependent from claim 9 and it is noted that Matsuba is relied on only in respect of the additional features recited in claim 10. Without prejudice to its individual merits, claim 10 is deemed non-obvious over the combination of Volz and Matsuba for the same reasons as claim 9 is deemed non-obvious over Volz alone.

***New Claims:***

New claims 15-19 are directed to the feature shown especially in FIGS. 2 and 4 of the

drawings and the associated text that the adapter and lamp assembly consists of four distinct elements. The lamp 12 is plugged into, but easily separable from the ballast 14. The ballast 14 is plugged into, but easily separable from the housing 28 of the adapter 16. The housing 28 is secured to the contact ring 30 for relative rotation in one direction only, but they cannot readily be separated. There is no disclosure or suggestion in the cited references of this structure. All three references show only structures in which the adapter housing is integral with the ballast. It is therefore believed that the present invention, as claimed in claims 15-19, is both novel and non-obvious over the prior art.

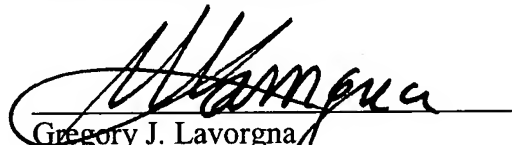
***Conclusion:***

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the examiner's objections and rejection and an early notice of allowance of all of claims 1-7 and 9-19 are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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